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SOCIOLOGICAL NOTES.

Potato-farms for the Poor in Berlin.*—The authorities in charge of poor relief in Berlin have for a number of years assisted needy families by allowing them the use, at about half cost, of allotments of land for potato raising. This is not considered as city relief, though the recommendations for admission are made by the district poor commissioners on the ground that otherwise relief would probably be needed in the course of the winter. Persons who have already had allotments, or who have a large number of children and can therefore use the potatoes for their own home consumption, have the preference.

The latest complete statistics appear to be those for 1894. In that year sixteen pieces of land, lying to the east, northeast and north, mainly within the city limits and in the vicinity of workingmen's quarters, were hired for this purpose and provided 2600 lots of 400 square metres each. These were divided by lot among the applicants from the corresponding parts of the city, so that no one had far to go to his bit of land.

The payment required for the use of a lot, ready ploughed and manured, is seven and a half marks (\$1.87), to be paid in five installments, one on receipt of the potatoes for planting and the rest monthly, beginning with the first of May. The applicant fills out a blank (giving name, address, rent, wage, former allotment, if any, relief, number of children and name of person recommending), and receives a paper giving full directions as to payments, method of cultivation and obligations incurred.

The potatoes for seed (75 kilograms) must be called for within a fortnight after the drawing of lots; they must not be taken home, but carried direct to the field. Some difficulty is caused by the inclination of many to eat the potatoes instead of planting them.

The planting must be done according to the inspector's directions and the planting of earlier varieties of potatoes or of anything but potatoes is forbidden. Careful instructions are given as to weeding, hoeing and so forth. In case of inability to do the work at the right time the inspector can have it done at the charge of the lot holder. When the potatoes begin to ripen a field watchman is put on duty, and persons are admitted to lots only on presentation of a paper and during daylight hours. The holders are notified when to harvest and must do so within a fortnight. Each must measure his crop and notify the

* This note is contributed by Miss Emily Greene Balch.

inspector of the amount. It is intended to have the potatoes used for family consumption, and their sale is accordingly forbidden.

The inspector speaks, on the whole, favorably of the work done, though there are always certain individuals "who make life a hell." The born Berliners are said to be far more satisfactory and efficient than those who have come to the city from country districts.

According to the figures for 1894, 2644 families at first applied for the 2600 lots, but 152 afterward withdrew so that 108 were, on their desire, granted a second lot. The 2492 families represented 15,542 persons, of whom 8993 were children under fourteen, giving an average of 6.2 persons and 3.6 children to each family. In 154 cases there was a failure to pay the required sums, but in 123 of these the crop was not declared forfeited in consideration of their urgent need. Thirty-three lots were dropped by the holders and cultivated for the benefit of the undertaking by the authorities. The remaining 2567 lots yielded 1,761,140 kilograms or nine times the amount planted.

Reckoned at the average November price (five marks for 100 kilograms) this gives 88,057 m., which sum, less 18,532 m. paid in, gives the cultivators a return on their labor of 69,525 m. or 26.74 m. (about \$6.50) per lot. The cost borne by the community was 17,792 m., of this 52 m. was met by a legacy. The Poor Board therefore paid out 17,740 m. or 6.82 m. per lot. Reckoning this together with the cultivator's payments as cost, the proceeds of the labor amounted to about 20 m. per lot.

The inspector reports for 1895—fifty hours of labor spent on the average on each lot beside one day for harvesting. If we call the time sixty hours the return was 33 pfennigs for an hour's labor, which for otherwise unemployed time, and a presumably poor grade of workers must, in comparison with prevailing Berlin wages, be considered favorable.*

Poor Relief in Holland.—The Netherlands Society for Political Economy and Statistics is engaged in an extensive investigation into the care of the poor in Holland. It has published a first installment relating to the city of Rotterdam,† accounts of other cities being in preparation. This is a careful account of all the agencies at work in Rotterdam, religious and philanthropic as well as governmental, for the alleviation of the condition of the poor. It gives a detailed statement of some sixty-eight such agencies, an account of their

* According to official statistics for Berlin, the weekly wage of a day laborer in May, 1887, was 16.20 m. The hours are not given, but with a ten-hour day this is only 27 pf. an hour.

† "*Armenzorg in Nederland, Gemeente Rotterdam*," M. Ph. Falkenburg, 2 parts. Pp. 286, Amsterdam, 1895 and 1896.

administration, and the statistics of their activity for recent years. The only general view is a brief statistical summary.

German Trade-Unions.* There are two general classes of these labor organizations in Germany, the *Fachvereine*, or *Gewerkschaften*, which are organized on an essentially socialistic basis, and the *Gewerkvereine*, more commonly known as the *Hirsch-Dunkersche* unions, from the names of their promoters, which are liberal and individualistic in character. Not all the members of the *Fachvereine* are socialists, however, and the careful attention to practical details of management, and avoidance of political discussions, due, of course, to German repressive laws relating to political associations, relieves them from a part of the stigma generally attaching to social democracy. The *Fachvereine* held their second Congress in Berlin May 4-8 last. One hundred and thirty-six delegates, representing fifty-six organizations, with a total membership of 300,000, assembled, and their discussions are indicative of some interesting tendencies in the German labor movement.

The topics of State Insurance and Labor Legislation were excluded on account of their political bearings. But the policy of maintaining out-of-work benefits was attacked on the ground that "There is no reason for relieving the state of its duty to the people." Though this principle seemed to find hearty acceptance, the benefits were recommended to the organizations as heretofore, because they were considered an indispensable weapon in the wage-struggle. Communal employment bureaus were discussed from the radical point of view, and the Congress voted to maintain the principle that the sale of labor must be wholly under the control of organized workers, and to oppose all experiments on any other basis. This means opposition to the present movement toward the erection of public employment offices, under joint control of representatives of employers and employed, a movement which has largely owed its origin and furtherance to the *Gewerkschaften* themselves. This doubtless means also hostility to practical experiments with state or communal agencies, such as insurance against unemployment as already introduced into Switzerland, and proposed in Frankfort-on-the-Main, Munich, Mannheim, and Cologne.

The Congress spent much time in discussing its form of central organization. No great change was made in the "General Commission" as constituted at the last Congress. It is still retained with little change in its personnel, and with Herr Legien as its president, in the capacity of a representative and executive body for the associated unions. More vigorous efforts will be made to organize women

* The substance of this note was sent from Berlin by Miss Emily Greene Balch.

in connection with men in the unions, and to fight the sweating-system.

The statistics of strikes, as given by the "General Commission" for the period 1890-91 to 1895, are as follows: Expenses for 541 strikes, lasting 3302 weeks, and involving 58,242 persons, were \$676,464.50. Three hundred and two strikes were defensive, 87 being successful, 75 partly successful, and 119 unsuccessful. Two hundred and forty-two strikes were aggressive, and these were proportionally more successful, the figures being: 90 successful, 91 partly successful, and 57 unsuccessful.

Building and Loan Associations as Promoters of Saving.—The first building association in America was organized in Frankford, Philadelphia, January 3, 1831,* and Mr. F. B. Sanborn, in his report relating to them presented at the annual meeting of the American Social Science Association at Saratoga in September, 1888, designated Philadelphia as the "breeding place" for these associations. The fourth annual convention of the United States League of Local Building and Loan Associations, organized by Mr. Seymour Dexter in 1892, was held in Philadelphia, July 22-23. Mr. Michael J. Brown, vice-president of the League, said that the present accumulation of money in the building associations in the United States, estimated for an average of only five years, is \$600,000,000. He also said that twice this sum which is invested at present has been saved by building society people. Most of it doubtless went into some permanent investment when drawn out as the shares matured. Carroll D. Wright, in the United States Labor Department Report, estimated in 1892 that there were 5860 associations in the United States, with 1,655,456 share holders and assets aggregating nearly \$500,000,000. According to the same report an analysis of the sex and occupation of the share holders in forty-two New England societies showed 80 per cent men and 20 per cent women; 72 per cent wage-earners, 16 per cent proprietors and managers, 7 per cent agents, clerks and bookkeepers, and 5 per cent professional occupations. Pennsylvania and Ohio are the leading states in this work. Mr. Brown's report at this convention showed 1239 associations in Pennsylvania, about 500 of which are in the city of Philadelphia. The assets of the associations of the state aggregate over \$100,000,000. There are at the present time in the United States over 6000 building associations, modeled on the local original ideas. This does not cover the national associations, which do not

* From data contained in Edmund Wrigley's "How to Manage Building Associations," Philadelphia, 1873, quoted by Seymour Dexter in his "Treatise on Corporative Savings and Loan Associations." Pp. 299. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1889. An excellent sketch of the rise and growth of this movement, together with a summary of legislation on the subject up to date of publication.

always adhere to the original principles, and many private organizations of a speculative character.

The object of the League is to bind together for purposes of mutual conference and profit the associations that are operated on true building association principles and run on philanthropic lines. A list of the topics discussed in this year's proceedings will indicate the character of the work and the wide range of interest in topics pertaining to the promotion of thrift which the leaders of this movement advocate. "The School System of Savings: Its Development and Growth," by D. Eldridge, of Boston; "The Building and Loan Association as a Permanent Savings Fund," by B. G. Vasen, Quincy, Ill.; "Pennsylvania Local Building Associations," by M. J. Brown, Philadelphia; "Voluntary Liquidation of Building Associations," by C. F. Bentley, Grand Island, Neb.; "Building Associations in the South," by J. H. Westover, Williamstown, Ky.; "Real Estate Depression of the Past Three Years and Its Effect on Building and Loan Associations," by H. T. McClung, St. Paul; "The Laboring Man in Building Associations," by Hon. James Clarency, Philadelphia; "The Relation of the Co-Operative Bank to the Community," by R. W. Hilliard, Massachusetts; "The Effect of Building and Loan Associations on the Growth of Chicago," by W. R. Smith, Chicago; "Legislation and Judicial Construction Affecting Building Associations," by I. H. C. Royse, Terre Haute; "The Best Methods of Paying Matured Stock," by Seymour Dexter, Elmira, N. Y.; symposium on "The Merits or Advantages of the Philadelphia and the Dayton Plan of Building and Loan Associations Compared," by Clerk of Philadelphia Select Council Joseph H. Paist and S. Rufus Jones, Dayton, O.

Money has been lost in many associations through ignorance as to the best methods of management, through fraud, through innocent speculation and unforeseen accidents in business, but on the whole they constitute, under many different names, in different parts of the country, one of the best agencies for the development of a class in society above the need of charity, but one which, without such inducements to thrift, might readily become a feeder to the dependent class and one which, by such aid, is easily made a bulwark of good citizenship.

The last few years have been trying ones for the managers of all such organizations, but the following words from the president's annual report seem to indicate a healthy financial condition in spite of difficulties:

"The past year has been one which in all financial affairs have called for conservative management. The financial panic of 1893, though stringent while it lasted, was less trying to building associations

throughout the land than the long period of liquidation which has followed in its train, and which has been more severely felt by them, in common with like institutions, during the past year than at any previous time.

"It is with keen satisfaction that we can report that the building and loan associations connected with our League have passed through the trying ordeal with an excellent showing, and that notwithstanding the fact that the interests confided to them are so large, yet carefulness of management has saved them from any great losses.

"In several instances where local associations have failed during the year, an examination of their affairs has revealed a departure from the correct principles of management of this class of associations by the granting of large loans upon real estate of a speculative character, instead of confining the operations to loans upon homes of moderate value. The years of steadily advancing values of real estate prior to 1893 induced an over-confidence, which permitted the granting of such loans.

"Painful as are the losses inflicted by such catastrophes, they are the unavoidable result of erroneous business methods; and these losses are not too high a price to pay for the experience, if the public will thereby learn to distinguish between the co-operative local building and loan associations and those which, while assuming their name, do not conduct business in accordance with their time-tried methods, but are in reality corporations sailing under false colors, and from the management of which the principles of co-operation have been eliminated."

The League made the following recommendations to the associations in reference to state legislation in the several states:

"That it is for the interest of building and loan associations that their management should be subject to supervision by the state; that the supervision should be conducted at the expense of the state, and not at the expense of the associations.

"That information of legislative enactments concerning building associations in various states should be collected.

"That the formation of reserve funds should be made compulsory by law."

It is probable that ere long the League will establish a bureau of information for the collection of more satisfactory statistics of associations and the dissemination of knowledge concerning their management. The next convention will meet in Detroit. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

President, Michael J. Brown, Philadelphia; First Vice-President, Luke W. Sanborn, Galesburg, Ill.; Second Vice-President, Colonel

William M. Bloomer, Buffalo, N. Y.; Third Vice-President, Timothy R. Foster, Vicksburg, Miss.; Treasurer, George H. Eddy, Fall River, Mass.; Secretary, Herman F. Cellarius, Dayton, O.; Assistant Secretary, George Forman, New Jersey.

Executive Committee.—Julius Stern, Illinois; George W. Smith, Indiana; W. E. Dodsworth, Louisiana; David Eldredge, Massachusetts; Frederick J. Maher, Mississippi; Thomas A. Fry, Nebraska; Seymour Dexter, New York; Frederick Bader, Ohio; Joseph H. Paist, Pennsylvania; Edmund E. Read, New Jersey.

Free Public Employment Office in New York City.*—Chapter 982 of New York Statutes for 1896 provided for a free employment bureau in New York City. The act became law May 28, and the bureau was opened at 331 East Fourteenth Street on July 20. Similar bureaus have been conducted with apparent success in Ohio and California. The Massachusetts Bureau of Labor has examined the subject carefully but in a recent report it seemed disinclined to take any practical steps toward introducing these bureaus. The Massachusetts report claims that the public is disposed to expect too much from such offices and experience in Paris would seem to warrant this assertion. The movement to remove any of the pressure at congested points in a metropolis like New York and to supply needed labor in rural districts of the state would seem to meet with favor all around. The crucial test will be the rigid investigation of the qualifications of all registered applicants and great caution in making recommendations to employers of labor, combined with considerable firmness in turning the totally unfit element over to charitable agencies whose business it is to deal with them. Only in this way can the office win the confidence of the employers of labor and in consequence render any service to the worthy laborer. This will be an exceedingly hard task for any public office if politics is allowed to play any part, however slight, in its administration. The New York office seems inclined to start out aright and its success will be watched with great interest by all students of the subject and many other persons anxious to advocate similar measures in other states. The following sections of the recent New York act will give an outline of the plan just inaugurated in New York City.

SECTION 1. It shall be the duty of the commissioner of statistics of labor, immediately upon the passage of this act, to organize and establish in all cities having a population of one million five hundred thousand inhabitants or more, a free public employment office or bureau for the purpose of receiving all applications for labor on the

* Mr. John J. Bealin, Superintendent of the Free Public Employment Office, New York, has kindly furnished the facts for this note.

part of those seeking employment and all applications for help on the part of those desiring to employ labor, and to appoint a superintendent and such clerical assistants for each office so organized as in the judgment of said commissioner may appear necessary for the proper conduct of the duties of the several offices.

SEC. 2. It shall be the duty of the superintendent of every free public employment office so organized to receive and record, in a book to be kept for that purpose, the names of all persons applying for labor or help, designating opposite the name of each applicant the character of employment or labor desired, and the address of such applicant. It shall also be the duty of every such superintendent to make a weekly report on Thursday of each week to said commissioner of the names and addresses of all applicants both for labor and help, and the character of employment or labor desired, and also the names of all persons securing employment through the respective offices. Said superintendent shall also perform such other duties in the collection of labor statistics, and in the keeping of books and accounts of their respective offices as the commissioner may determine, and shall make a semi-annual report of the expense of maintaining their respective offices to the commissioner.

SEC. 3. It shall be the duty of the commissioner to cause to be printed weekly a list of all applicants for labor or help, and the character of the employment or labor desired, received by him from the various offices organized pursuant to the provisions of this act, and to cause two copies of such list to be mailed on Monday of each week to the superintendent of each of said offices in the state, one of which copies shall be posted by the superintendent immediately on receipt thereof in a conspicuous place in his office, subject to the inspection of all persons desiring labor or help, and the other of which copies shall be filed by the superintendent in his office for reference. Said commissioner shall also cause one copy of such list to be mailed to the supervisor of each township in this state.

SEC. 4. Every application for labor or help made to any office organized under this act shall be null and void for thirty days from the receipt unless renewed by the applicant.

SEC. 5. Every applicant for help shall notify the superintendent of the office to which the application was made, by mail, within ten days after the required help designated in his or her application has been secured, which notice shall contain the name and last preceding address of the employe secured through such office, and any refusal or failure by any applicant for help so to notify such superintendent shall bar such applicant from all future rights and privileges of such employment office, at the discretion of the commissioner, to whom the superintendent shall report such refusal or failure.

SEC. 6. No compensation or fee whatsoever shall, directly or indirectly be charged or received from any person or persons applying for labor or employment through said offices. The commissioner, any superintendent or clerk, or any other person employed in any such offices charging or receiving any compensation or fee from any applicant for labor whomsoever, as provided in this act, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be fined in any sum not exceeding one hundred dollars or imprisonment not exceeding thirty days.

SEC. 7. Applicants for help shall be construed to mean employers wanting employes, and applicants for labor shall be construed to mean persons wanting work to do.

SEC. 8. The tenure of office for all superintendents and clerks of free public employment offices, shall be two years from the date of appointment, but the commissioner shall have power of removing any such superintendents and clerks for good and sufficient cause.

SEC. 9. The superintendent of each of the offices organized under the provisions of this act shall receive a salary, payable monthly, which shall be fixed by the commissioner, but which shall in no case exceed the sum of one thousand two hundred dollars per annum. The clerk or clerks required in such offices shall receive a salary of not more than fifty dollars per month. Salaries, postage, stationery and other expenses necessary for the proper conduct of the business of such free public employment offices shall be paid by the state out of any funds of the state treasury not otherwise appropriated.

Five thousand dollars were appropriated to start with. During the first week the office was open 3000 names were registered. This seems like a very large number but perhaps "new hopes" helped to enlarge the roll. The British Government Report for ten governmental bureaus in London gave a much smaller total for London for the whole month of May. There were registered during the month of May in London at St. Pancras Station, 120; Battersea Station, 126; Islington, 189; St. Martin's, 85; Hackney, 85; Salvation Army, 1006; Y. M. C. A., Regent St., 68; Cavendish St., 400, which gives a total of 2077. In the provinces the registrations were as follows: Salford, 20; Ipswich, 49; Plymouth, 78; Liverpool, 118, making a total of 265. The registration blanks used at the office in New York give the following items: name, address, age, nationality, occupation, read or write, married or single, number of children, number of dependent children, where last employed, how long employed, how long idle, how long a resident of New York State, rate of wages received from last employer, and cause of idleness.

Cultivation of Vacant City Lots in Brooklyn.*—The cultivation of vacant lots by the unemployed has been continued in Brooklyn this year with increasing success. The experiment was begun in the spring of 1895, under the direction of a committee of citizens appointed by Hon. Charles A. Schieren, at that time mayor of the city. Land was granted free of expense by the German-American Improvement Company. About twelve hundred dollars were contributed by a few citizens to defray the expenses of conducting the experiment. The results of the first year were not so successful as some of the promoters of the undertaking had hoped. Only about twenty men out of all the unemployed in Brooklyn availed themselves of the opportunity. About half the fund raised was used in paying a superintendent and in having the ground plowed and fertilized. The value of the crops gathered by the cultivators exceeded the amount expended, and six hundred dollars of the sum originally contributed was left for the present year. Land was granted again by the same company and thirty-five men gladly availed themselves of the opportunity. Each man was allowed the use of about an eighth of an acre; the land was plowed and fertilized, tools and seed were furnished by the committee. A very important factor in the work has been the granting of free tickets by the Brooklyn City Elevated Railroad, so that men from different parts of the city have been able to ride between their homes and their garden plots. All applications for land were made at the office of the Bureau of Charities, the general secretary of which organization was also the secretary of the committee on the cultivation of vacant lots. Care was taken that all to whom land was assigned should be men with families dependent upon them and in need of assistance.

Very few had had experience in gardening, but under the direction of the superintendent, a practical farmer, nearly all have succeeded in raising excellent crops of vegetables. The largest crop is potatoes, but peas, beans, tomatoes, beets, onions, turnips and other vegetables have been raised.

Thirty-five poor families have had the benefit of an abundant supply of vegetables during the summer, and a store will be laid by for winter use, and all from about four acres of land.

The great value of the enterprise, however, does not consist in the amount of the material product obtained, but in the moral effect upon the men who have taken part in the work, and in the example which has been afforded of the possible resources of the land in reach of the inhabitants of the city tenements.

* Contributed by Rev. William I. Nichols, Secretary of the Bureau of Charities in Brooklyn.

If every poor family could have a garden, even a small one, the condition of the poor of the city would be greatly improved. Gardens cannot be taken to the occupants of the tenement houses, but the inhabitants can be transported to the land and bring the products back to their homes.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to hope that some of the poor of the city can be induced to move into the country after having been taught how to cultivate the soil.

Any one familiar with the problem of dealing with the poor of a large city must recognize that the diminution of the number trying to live in the city is an indispensable condition of any permanent improvement.

Too many people are seeking to obtain self-supporting employment in a limited locality. There are many convinced of this necessity who are willing to go into the country if they are taught how to do the work that will there be required of them. A great need in every large city is more industrial education, especially in an agricultural direction. It is true that there is a steady stream of population tending from country to the city, but it is equally true that another stream in an opposite direction can be created.

As youth of the country are attracted to the city by the glamour created by their imagination, on the other hand the youth of the city, impressed by the bitter experience of the hardships of city life, are ready to be guided to the happier life of the country.

The schools in the country too often devote chief attention to studies which fit their pupils for city life, and really unfit them for the work of the country. To counteract this evil, the city schools should give more attention to that kind of education which will qualify the children of the city to enter upon agricultural employment. A right education of the children of the poor is a most important mode of relieving poverty. The surface of this continent is abundantly able to sustain a far larger population than is living upon it now, provided they will spread out over it, and will intelligently and industriously develop its resources.

To this desirable end, the cultivation of vacant city lots is a first and an important step.

Socialism.—The most significant feature of modern socialism probably consists in its claims as a political faith. It ought to be at its best the greater the measure of political power it enjoys. M. Yves Guyot and the *Nation* (N. Y.) remind us frequently that the government of the small socialistic towns in France, where the socialists have complete control of the town council, will not increase our faith in socialism in practice. At the recent municipal elections in France,

the socialists held their own in Paris, whose council is made up of a large number of socialists. It seems that they are in control in Marseilles, La Cidtat, Calais, Roubaix, Carmaux, Cette and in St. Denis, a suburb of Paris where they have had complete control for years. The socialistic platform, in many cases where these political victories have been won, has been scarcely more than a moderately radical labor program including many things we readily concede in this country and in England. It would make an interesting study, however, if some one will examine, in an impartial but thorough and scientific spirit, the methods the socialists pursue and the results of their endeavors. M. Guyot can hardly be considered an impartial observer and the work should be undertaken in a more thorough way and on a larger scale. M. Guyot claims that the socialists in St. Denis have not fulfilled any of their pledges, and worse than this, that they have added to the very burdens which they formerly criticised so freely. For example, instead of abolishing octroi charges they have increased them on many articles, directly affecting the goods consumed by the poor. The cost of administering the affairs of the town council, including salaries of officials, has risen, it seems, from 12,000 *frs.* in 1892 to 44,000 *frs.* in 1895. Hospital relief and relief formerly voted for widows, orphans and unemployed has curiously enough been abolished. In a note on "Socialistic Municipalities," in the issue of *London* for May 7, 1896, it is stated that similar results have followed the election of socialistic majorities in many towns in Belgium. The mere suggestion of such things should arouse the spirit of inquiry, and it is to be hoped that the opportunity will not be lost to make a careful and fair study of all the conditions under which the socialistic labor parties are working in these foreign towns. If some one will undertake to do this piece of work thoroughly and comprehensively, he will find a large audience for whatever he has to say on the subject, and may perform a very useful service to social science.